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Poetry and Progress.

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AN ADDRESS

TO THE DELEGATES

AT THE

Annual Meeting and Conference

OF THE

Yorkshire Union of Institutes.

Held at ILKLEY.

BY

SIR WILLIAM H. BAILEY, F.R.G.S.

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JULY 25th. 1910.



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POETRY & PROGRESS.

BY SIR WILLIAM H. BAILEY, F.R.G.S.

Poetry is the fine art of expressing the loftiest ideals; true poetry exalts our emotions and our intellects. Culture may improve but cannot create a poet; for it is a divine gift. All true poetry has in it some philosophy and always a message. Keats escapes from giving a definition by proclaiming :—

“ They shall be accounted kings
Who simply say the most heart-easing things.”

Progress is founded on science; the produce; the evolution of all the ages. Progress exists where there is cordial and active recognition of rights and duties, and of that intellectual and physical liberty which has its foundation on unselfish acceptance of the brotherhood of man.

My friends, in these are all the commandments and the chief is Duty.

The longer on this earth we live,
And weigh the various qualities of man,
The more we see the high stern featured beauty
Of plain devotedness to duty.
Silent and calm, not paid by mortal praise,
But finding amplest recompense
In work done squarely and unwasted days.

Poetry may consist of words—the children of the soul, black on white, either prose or verse; or the poet's message may be sent from the sculptor in marble, metal or clay; or poetry may be the colour on canvas of the painter; or the architect's poem may be a cathedral tower which has blossomed from the depths of a stone quarry, which through the ages sings voiceless psalms of faith and hope and peace and good-will towards men.

A nation without idealists is a nation without progress; a garden without culture; a ship without a pilot; for the idealists are the pioneers of civilization.

GLADSTONE AND TENNYSON.

When the King of Denmark with Lord Tennyson and Mr. Gladstone were cruising in the North Sea a few years ago, at Kirkwall, the Veteran Statesman proposed the health of the Poet Laureate, he said that long after he was forgotten, when as a mere man of action and statesman his name would scarcely be recorded in the story of his times, the name of the Poet and Idealist—Tennyson—would for ever be among the immortals, for a statesman is only for an age and a great poet for all time.

O'Shaughnessy, who died in the year 1881, the poet whose work lacks appreciation at present, for his books had little circulation in his life time, has written the most supremely musical lines on the idealists and the epoch creators and their domination of human destiny—words full of lyric beauty. There has been nothing more musical since Keats :—

We are the music makers,
 And we are the dreamers of dreams,
 Wandering by lone sea breakers,
 And sitting by desolate streams ; --
 World-losers and world-forsakers,
 On whom the pale moon gleams ;
 Yet we are the movers and shakers
 Of the world for ever it seems.
 We through the ages lying
 In the buried past of the earth,
 Built Ninevah with our sighing
 And Babel in our mirth.
 And overthrew them with our prophesying
 To the old for the new world's worth,
 For each age is a dream that is dying
 And a new one coming to birth.

A man without imagination benefits little by education. The contemplation of the best ideals is creative refinement in itself ; the student obtains automatic mental tillage and improved taste ; and a sense of proportion, and for want of a better name we say of such " he has initiative individuality " ; he is efficient to himself and of value to his nation. Every ignorant man is a drag on the community, he is a weak link in the chain.

George Eliot, who is the nearest feminine approach to Shakespeare, says :—

" Choose the noblest,
 For that higher vision
 Shall poison all meaner choice for evermore."

The story of " The dream that is dying " and the recognition of " the new one coming to birth " has many martyrs for historical landmarks among the seers, the prophets, and the poets.

Long before Socrates and Anaxagorus, we find many records of revolt against the accepted theories of the phenomena of nature.

The Egyptians, the Persians, the Babylonians and the Greeks, and nearly all ancient people reverentially deified nature's forces, and their poets and priests piously sung their praises. The sun was the father and the earth was the mother, and the earth's children were the fruits for man and beast, and later the flowers were letters from the angels to man. Doubters who disdained to accept these somewhat fascinating myths were destroyed by the monopolists of what they thought wrongly was the Tree of Knowledge. The story of the stars is the story of persecution of scholars by ignorant school men.

That early scientist and prophet, Socrates, died because he declined to accept this theology. How beautiful and wonderful and pitiful it is to read Plato's dialogues, where Socrates says:—"The sun is not a God—it is a ball of fire; the moon is not a God—it is a stone and shines by borrowed light; the earth is not flat—it is round, and I must die for saying this." Before his death he said pathetically, "I am considered one of the wisest men in Athens, but I search for the truth with humility and if any man can show me a new way to find the truth, he shall be my schoolmaster."

Galileo

SCIENCE TEACHES NATURE'S LAWS.

The indestructibility of matter was known to these ancient men; the hand-writing was on the walls and in the rocks and in the stars, and in the solemn music of the mountain torrents, but they had no knowledge of causes. They could not read the law—the beginning of all science.

In Ovid's Metamorphosis, the startling sentences show a glimmer of the laws of gravity and the conservation of energy, but the laws were decyphered two thousand years later by Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Dalton, and Dr. Joule, who have given them to man in the Class Books of the Schools of the world. Joule's discovery of the Mechanical Equivalent of Heat being the grandest of them all; indeed, it is the greatest generalisation in the universe, the complete foundation of physical science.

Dr. Joule spoke in respect to this work of his life "order is thus maintained in the universe; nothing is deranged; nothing ever lost" were the words of this great schoolmaster of God's creation.

I have often wondered whether Longfellow ever saw these words of Joule; for in a tragedy written about 1850, when Joule's work was barely accepted, he alludes in beautiful lines to the indestructibility of matter:—

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" Nothing that is shall perish utterly,
But perish only to revive again
In other forms, as clouds restore in rain,
The exhalations of the land and sea.
Men build their houses from the masonry
Of ruined tombs, the passion and the pain
Of hearts that have long ceased to beat, again
Will throb in hearts that are or are to be."

THE HEBREW POETS.

The poet who creates noble and exalted emotion has the divine gift, and greatest in all literature, and among those who have inspired our best English Poets, are the Hebrew Poets of the Old Testament.

The Psalms of David; that sublime poem—the Book of Job, and the glory and the majesty of the Prophet Isaiah, stamp the literature of the Jews as the greatest in those ancient days, and is so now, for art is ever young and what was truth and beauty then, is truth and beauty to-day and will be in scorn of time for evermore.

Neither Homer, Aeschylus, Virgil, Dante nor Milton surpass the Hebrew Poets in their appeals to the heart, the soul, and understanding of man.

All good poetry speaks for itself and tells its own tale, not requiring the learned alone to understand it, the message must be simple and understood by the cottager or the King, and these Hebrew Seers and Idealists have this supreme quality.

The great arraignment in the first chapter of Isaiah is full of dramatic Majesty in its appeal; in its poetic splendour; in its tragic despair.

Shakespeare's " King Lear " is its only equal in literature, for in dignity, passion, joy, love or despair, Shakespeare's work is without rival in the world, and remember this—Shakespeare is the epitome of the genius and righteousness of the Old Testament and the divine message of the New.

Isaiah's words will be familiar to all :—

Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O earth;

For the Lord hath spoken.

I have nourished and brought up children

And they have rebelled against me.

The ox knoweth his owner,

And the ass his master's crib,

But Israel doth not know

My people doth not consider.

If a man wishes to be cultured and learned in the music, in the tunes of the heart strings or to find solace in the time of

trouble and guidance in difficulty, the Dictionary, the Directory—the great guide to wisdom—is the Bible, that ancient Text Book of the Soul.

I have seen many lists of the 100 best books, but have seen few which includes the best and also the cheapest book in the world—the Bible.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ANCIENT BARDS.

Long before the printed book, the Bards were the Idealists, the seers and the historiographers of the tribe or the nation. They were the first map makers, astronomers and medicine men, and in Northern Europe they were the knowing men, the cunning men, the Counts and the Kings; all these words have their origin in one root word among the Scandinavian races "to know," Gaelic "canny man," Norse "Canute," and British "Councillor."

To present to people in exalted verse, noble deeds and examples of courage and capacity to suffer in defending liberty and resisting oppression, and to sing Psalms of Victory over defeated enemies were the chief functions of these ancient men.

The lays of the Scalds in the Scandinavian Sagas; ancient British, Teutonic and Gaelic Bards in the North; and of Homer, Aeschylus and others in the South are examples in which they boast in heroic strains of the mighty deeds of their warriors, chieftains, King and Gods.

We may be pardoned for saying that which is true—that modern English Literature is richer in idealism, science, discovery, and invention of our own people than that of any other country.

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THE TEXT BOOK OF THE IDEAL CITIZEN.

Our greatest idealist of the 16th century was Sir Thomas More, who wrote "Utopia." This great work has dominated garden cities and town planning, schools, and noble institutions ever since it was written. The word "Utopia" is often used to signify something impossible or absurd by those who have not read the book, but never uttered without respect by those who have studied this great text book of the Ideal English Citizen and the Ideal City.

In this country, after the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, was the beginning of a new life, the new learning, scholars began to rule England. The mother of Henry the Seventh, the Lady Margaret—the most learned woman of her day, gave a great

impulse to learning; to the formation of Grammar Schools and Colleges. All the Tudor Kings and Queens inherited her love of learning. She was a patron of Caxton's first Printing Press, and held in pious remembrance at Oxford and Cambridge as a great friend of learning.

The Bible had been printed in a foreign tongue and was now being printed in English. Cheap books multiplied the power of the idealists and concentrated the experience of the ages. Cardinal Morton told Henry the Seventh's first Parliament that he was commanded by the King to say that the first principles of arts and crafts must have attention; that foreigners should be protected in their religion and not molested, and craftsmen and workmen should be encouraged to introduce new industries, and this was the first public cry for Technical Education.

From the time of Henry the Seventh, to the death of Shakespeare was great because of this increased force of its dreamers, idealist and poets. Shakespeare's gospel of science is full of prophetic meaning—he thirsted for science.

The observant man—

“ Finds tongues in trees; books in running brooks;
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

Shakespeare says “ Our children have lost or do not learn for want of science—the sciences that should become our country.”

In that spacious age, the beneficence of nature, its abundance and friendship became recognised by man, “ For nature never did betray those who loved her.”

Botany soon became a science; new continents were added to the maps and new stars were named in the heavens, and many visions of the idealists and martyrs were becoming realities. Tradition was ignored, and the circulation of the blood was discovered and great progress was made in the healing arts. Science was slowly appealing to man, and science, by the execution of Bruno and the punishment of Gallileo was driven out of Italy, its first modern home being Florence, and its new home was London because we had greater intellectual liberty in England, for thinking of new methods had ceased to be a criminal offence.

In the time of Charles the Second, the Royal Society in London and its members—Newton, Halley, Harvey and many other Idealists and Philosophers worked at the stars; the physical forces and the qualities of the gases, steam, and water. It was the age of the early Steam Engine. Flamsteed became

Astronomer Royal and the Greenwich Observatory was erected. The Sextant of Newton; the Chronometer of Harrison of Pontefract, and other Nautical Instruments invented by Englishmen were placed at the service of those who first, in a scientific manner, used the stars as milestones.

Critchley Prince—the poor Lancashire lad poet—is quoted by Dr. Gore in “Aids to Scientific Discovery.” The verse symbolises the qualities that have made this country famous for its great discoverers, pioneers and inventors.

Who are the great?

They who have boldly ventured to explore
 Unsounded seas and lands unknown before;
 Soared on the wings of science, wide and far,
 Measured the sun and weighed each distant star;
 Pierced the dark depths of ocean and of earth,
 And brought uncounted wonders into birth;
 Repelled the pestilence—restrained the storm,
 And given new beauty to the human form;
 Weakened the voice of reason and unfurled
 The page of truthful knowledge to the world;
 They who have toiled and studied for mankind,
 Aroused each slumbering faculty of mind,
 Taught us a thousand blessings to create,
 These are the nobly great!

Science is the perception of the obvious; prevision is the true test of science. Having a knowledge of causes we can foretell results, or as it has been well said by Lord Bacon “the ignorance of the cause frustrates the effect.” Science is the true liberator of the soul of man from guesswork and the mumbo jumbo worship of magic and superstition. Science is the true religion, for science is the reverential perception, acceptance and utilisation of God’s creation. Science is the eye of the soul. Science gives us the law, the order, the harmony, and the divine music and poetry in nature and humanity, for as William Watson’s melodious verse says:—

“Trees in their blooming,
 Tides in their flowing,
 Stars in their circling,
 Tremble with song.

God on His Throne
 Is eldest of Poets,
 Unto his measures
 Moveth the whole.

THE POETS—THE PROPHETS OF SCIENCE.

As coming events cast their shadows before them, the poets and idealists through all the ages have been the men who have been most familiar with nature's mysteries, and in many cases have anticipated or foretold the mechanical and scientific achievements of the present day. Sir Walter Raleigh was a poet and inventor. Nautical instruments were invented by Drummond—the poet and friend of Ben Jonson—who invented and patented them in the time of Charles the First. Drummond's specification is No. 1 at the Patent Office

In Hakluyt's voyages are dial telegraphs for communicating between London and Paris, and from the inside of a prison to the outside, and in the "Iliad" boats that were driven without sails and oars. In the 17th Century Bishop Wilkins, of Chester, prophesied Flying Machines. Ben Jonson says, the Alchemist "Can extract each particular virtue from the sun and teach dull nature what her forces are."

In the 18th Century that wonderful poet and scientist, Erasmus Darwin—grandfather of the late Dr. Darwin—prophesied the steamboat, the steamship, and also the aeroplane.

"Soon shall thy arm, Unconquered Steam; afar,
 Drag the slow barge or drive the rapid car;
 Or on wide waving wings expanded bear
 The flying chariot through the fields of air.
 Fair crews triumphant leaning from above,
 Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move;
 Or warrior-bands alarm the gaping crowd,
 And armies shrink beneath the shadowy cloud."

Nasmyth of the Steam Hammer was a poet and painter, inventor and astronomer. Many writers, as I have said, tried to grasp the nature of the indestructibility of matter long before the laws were given to us by Dr. Joule, and right through, the knowledge of the glory and the wonder and the mystery and the law and the science of nature and humanity have been prevised by idealists and the poets.

The Members of this Association are bound together by a common object; sincere truth hunters, educationalists, and full of curiosity, full of the divine wonder to find the inner meaning of things, to discover methods that will improve.

I am delighted to know that you begin at the roots of things; you believe in education; you believe in the library and learning among the many methods of social reform; you desire to create imagination when none or little exists, and to cultivate a love of the poets and of our great idealists is one chief method of your blessed work. The mere contemplation of your good work earns its own reward.

Our greatest wealth is not in works and warehouses or balances at the bank. No! it lies on the shelves of our libraries, where the poorest in the land may be on visiting terms with the lovers of man; the Kings and Princes of wisdom and human brotherhood; the greatest of them all being the son of the Stratford yeoman—William Shakespeare.

“ The King of England’s Kings,
The rest with all their pomps and trains,
Are moulder’d half remembered things,
’Tis he alone that lives and reigns.”

Whether it be in science, art, invention, or liberty, the Poet and Idealist have always led the van. The progress of any nation or people may be measured by their predominance. To lovers of humanity they may sometimes seem to be voices crying in the wilderness, but the work has not been in vain; the seed corn of the idealists of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, has produced the opulent harvest of the wonderful age of Victoria.

“ For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,

And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns.”

If I were requested to name the greatest Idealist of the last century, the man whose life’s work symbolised the best in the British race, first and foremost being love of liberty; qualities that are an inspiration to struggling nationalities and the despair of the oppressed of other nations, I would give the name of that great Yorkshireman who was born at Hull—William Wilberforce—who persuaded this nation to pay twenty million pounds to liberate, to strike away the fetters of the slave; the greatest, the most supreme act of unselfish chivalry in the history of man.

Man’s ancient Gods are now the servants of science; the dreams of the lovers of man are slowly becoming realities; the work of the ages is producing rich harvests; as science increases human labour decreases and leisure is created for thinking of rights and duties, to use the words of Dr. H. D. Traill :—

" Fire he tames, and water serves him, earth her treasure-
 hiding robe
 Raises at his bidding, lightning speeds his message round the
 globe.
 These once foes he makes his vassals; other foes more hostile
 still,
 Irreclaimable to service, forces only strong for ill,
 Each succeeding generation breathes a stronger, healthier
 breath;
 Every decade sees new tillage conquered from the wastes of
 death;
 Nature yearly makes submission; soon the philosophic dream
 Will become the work day waking, and mankind will reign
 supreme."

The best gardener is the schoolmaster; homoculture is the chief culture; the most exalted form of human labour.

Is there any nobler duty or destiny than that of spending life and strength in increasing the stock of human knowledge or human power?

The laws of the conservation of energy and the indestructibility of force teach us that no investment of good intellectual or spiritual work is in vain, so the good seed sown in due time will yield an abundant harvest.

For your kind reception; you lovers of learning, you workers for sweetness and light—for your records for years proclaims that fact—please receive my heartfelt thanks.

1. In what sense are the Great Principles

of Justice?

of the Republic?

of the Republic?

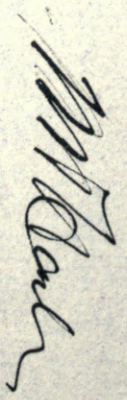


but will write you before I come.

With kind regards,

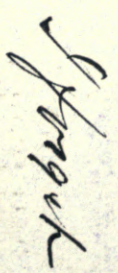
Dear Madame Duverg,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Duverg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail.

(1. Enclos:)

P.S. In what street are the Cecil Chambers?

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Cecil Chambers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail.

TELEPHONE No. 31 SALE.

SALE HALL,
Cheshire.

JULY 25th. 1912.

Dear Madame Duverg,

I shall not be in London for two or three weeks
as I have no business there and I want you to finish the miniature.

I send you one of my Addresses on "Poetry & Progress" in which there
is a fairly good photograph. The miniature was not at all to my liking
and I am sure you can do better if you try, and the picture may give
you a hint or two. I hope to be in London in about a fortnight

Just before noon.

With supp. time.

State House.

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